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Monday
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Part VIII

Department of Education

Technology, Educational Media, and Materials for Individuals With Disabilities Program; Notice of Final Priority and Inviting Applications for New Awards

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Technology, Educational Media, and Materials for Individuals With Disabilities Program

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of final priority for fiscal years 1992 and 1993 for the Technology, Educational Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities Program.

SUMMARY: The Secretary announces a final priority for the Technology, Educational Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities Program to ensure effective use of program funds and to direct funds to an area of identified need during fiscal years 1992 and 1993.

EFFECTIVE DATES: This priority takes effect July 30, 1992 or later if the Congress takes certain adjournments. If you want to know the effective date of this priority, call or write the Department of Education contact person.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Linda Glidewell, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3524, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202–2640. Telephone: (202) 732–1099. Deaf and hard of hearing individuals may call (202) 732–6153 for TDD services.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of this program is to support projects and centers for advancing the availability, quality, use, and effectiveness of technology, assistive technology, educational media, and materials in the education of children and youth with disabilities. In creating part G, of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Congress expressed the intent that the projects and centers funded under that part should be primarily for the purpose of enhancing research and development advances and efforts being undertaken by the public or private sector, and to provide necessary linkages to make more efficient and effective the flow from research and development to application.

This priority supports AMERICA 2000, the President's strategy for moving the Nation toward the National Education Goals, by promoting the effective and efficient use of technology, media, and materials among special education, related services, and regular education personnel. The priority thereby seeks to help children and youth with disabilities reach the high levels of academic achievement called for by the Goals.

Note: This notice of final priority does not solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under this competition is published in a separate notice in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

On April 16, 1992, the Secretary published a notice of proposed priority for this program in the **Federal Register** (57 FR 13602–13604).

Analysis of Comments and Changes

In response to the Secretary's invitation in the notice of proposed priority, one party submitted a comment. An analysis of this comment follows. Technical and other minor changes are not addressed.

Comment: One commenter recommended that the priority should address the need to develop systems and equipment for transcribing from the technology of print-text publishers to hard-copy or refreshable braille textual materials.

Discussion: The Secretary concurs that the activities recommended by the commenter have potential value, and believes that they are included under the rubric of the priority as written. Rather than prescribe specific activities, the Secretary prefers to allow individual applicants to propose and justify activities.

Changes: None.

Priority

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that respond to the following priority. The Secretary funds under this competition only applications that meet this absolute priority:

Priority—Practice Improvement Center on the Effective and Efficient Use of Technology, Media, and Materials in the Provision of Education and Related Services to Children and Youth with Disabilities (CFDA 84.180N)

Background

Effective and efficient use of technology, media, and materials can support two objectives of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): (1) Designing instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities, and (2) maximizing the extent to which children with disabilities can be appropriately educated with children who do not have disabling conditions.

Yet, previous Office of Special Education Programs supported research, as well as field-initiated research, has found that there are many barriers to the effective and efficient use of technology, media, and materials with children and youth with disabilities. Many instructional products are not designed to fit the needs of children and youth with disabilities. Technology, media, and materials are not always compatible with the curriculum or with other instructional procedures. Assistive devices are not always fully appropriate to the needs of specific children and youth with disabilities or the settings in which they must function. Teachers using technology, media, and materials do not always have access to sufficient training and assistance in the schools.

Purpose

The purpose of this priority is to establish a national practice improvement center, the mission of which is to promote the effective and efficient use of technology, media, and materials by improving the professional practices of special education, related services, and regular education personnel providing special education and related services to children and youth with disabilities. The center must be national in scope and must encompass the full range of disabling conditions.

The phrase "technology, media, and materials" encompasses a broad range of products and systems, including books and other textual materials, audiotapes, videotapes, videodiscs, computer hardware and software, compact disks and CD–ROM, broadcast media such as television and radio, multimedia, and other products and systems that store, convey, and process information. Specifically included are instructional technologies, media, and materials, as well as "assistive technology devices" as defined in section 602(a)(25) of the IDEA.

Effective and efficient use of technology, media, and materials is based on compatibility with (a) the needs of children and youth with disabilities and their families; (b) curriculum, instruction, and related services; and (c) systems and procedures used to provide special education and related services and to promote access and inclusion in educational activities. Effective and efficient use must be associated with positive outcomes for children and youth with disabilities and their families.

This national center must improve professional practices, which include a range of functions performed by teachers, administrators, and others in planning, administering, delivering, and evaluating special education and related services. Those practices are based upon professional competencies and attitudes, and on organizational factors such as policies, resources, and linkages. Practice improvement may entail professional development,

organizational development, implementation of innovations, knowledge access and use, collaboration and linking, and other processes. Practice improvement should be associated with positive outcomes for children and youth with disabilities and their families.

The center must be a catalyst and facilitator that collects and anaylzes available information, validates and extends the information, tests approaches for improving practices, and promotes the exchange and use of information.

Strategic Plan

Given the scope and magnitude of the center's national mission, it is essential for the center to formulate a strategic plan to focus and guide its efforts. The strategic plan must include the following:

(1) A statement and justification of critical goals for accomplishing the center's mission

The critical goals in the strategic plan must address processes that, singly or in combination, have significant potential for improving professional practices in the efficient and effective use of technology, media, and materials. The practices of teachers, administrators, and others must be targeted directly or indirectly. The goals must be selected and justified on the basis of their potential for meeting needs and accomplishing the center's mission productively and efficiently.

(2) An analysis of factors that may impede or facilitate attainment of the goals

The goals must be analyzed to identify such factors as needs, challenges, resources, and issues that may affect their attainment. These factors must then be reflected in the objectives and activities developed for attaining the goals.

(3) A set of objectives and activities that translate the goals into operational plans for the center

Although the strategic plan is subject to modification during the course of the center's operation, it must be developed as a five-year plan. Goals, objectives, and activities must be formulated for this entire period. The plan must include five general types of activities—analysis and synthesis of extant information, research studies, developing and supporting networks and exchanges, knowledge access and use, and evaluation. These activities are discussed below. Additional activities may be performed as needed to accomplish the center's goals and mission.

A plan for refining the proposed strategic plan during the initial months of the project and a plan for annually reviewing and revising the strategic plan must also be included.

Required Center Activities

Analysis and Synthesis of Extant Information

The center must provide for the ongoing collection, review, and analysis of extant information on the use of technology, media, and materials with children and youth with disabilities and on approaches for improving professional practices. Research findings must be used, if available. For critical topics where research findings are limited or inconclusive, the center must use information such as program descriptions and evaluations, theoretical papers, policy statements, expert opinions, etc., as well as research findings. Procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting information must be rigorous and systematic.

Research Studies

The center must conduct or commission carefully targeted research studies for validating or extending its information analyses and testing approaches for improving practices in the use of technology, media, and materials. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques may be employed, including group and single-subject designs, surveys, case studies, and focus groups.

Developing and Supporting Networks and Exchanges

The center must establish and maintain contacts with institutions of higher education; professional associations; Federal, State and local agencies; projects engaged in activities relevant to the center's mission; practitioners; and other individuals and organizations who can contribute to the center's efforts. These contacts are intended to facilitate a range of activities. For example, ongoing communication with members of the research community will gain access to research issues, activities, and findings, allow possible research collaboration, and provide a means for distributing the center's findings and influencing future research trends. Ongoing communication with practitioners and their representative groups will guide the development of strategic plans, gain access to the practitioners' perspectives, obtain knowledge for improving practice, and provide a means for evaluating and distributing the center's products.

Contacts may be accomplished through the full range of communication mechanisms, including in-person contact, print interaction and procedures, use of media such as electronic networks, and computer or telephone-based conferencing.

The center must coordinate its activities, as appropriate, with recipients of grants under the Technology Related Assistance Act (Pub. L. 100–407). In addition, the center must maintain an ongoing exchange of information with the Center to Advance the Quality of Technology, Media, and Materials for Providing Special Education and Related Services to Children with Disabilities (CFDA 84.180M) at the University of Oregon. This ongoing exchange must include (1) sharing information about ongoing activities and resources; (2) joint planning; and (3) collaborating in each other's activities, to the extent appropriate.

Knowledge Access and Use

Providing access to knowledge and promoting its use are critical to the center's mission and must include a range of functions beyond increasing general awareness and distributing center information. Knowledge access and use activities must include communication between the center and targeted audiences and exchange of information between practitioners and among different communities. Activities must also be tailored for various uses of information, such as selection, adoption, and implementation of improved practices.

Throughout the project, the center must engage targeted audiences in the development, exchange, distribution, and use of center materials. Formats for the exchange, distribution, and use of center information may include a range of media formats (e.g., videotape, audiotape, etc.) as well as print formats.

Evaluation.

Evaluation activities must address both "proximal" and "distal" effects of the center's activities. Proximal (immediate) effects include impact on audiences having direct contact with center products, information, and activities. Distal (more long-term) effects include indicators or widespread impact on the practices of special education, related services, and regular education personnel in using technology, media, and materials with children and youth with disabilities. Evaluation activities

must reflect a clear operational definition of professional practices needed for the effective and efficient use of technology, media, and materials.

Time Frame

The Secretary will approve a cooperative agreement with a project period, of up to 36 months. The Secretary may make a continuation award for an additional two-year project period, subject to the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a). Activities in the first year must include staffing, refinement of the strategic plan, specification and implementation of activities for analysis and synthesis, research, networks and exchanges, knowledge access and use, and evaluation. At the beginning of each subsequent year, the strategic plan must be reviewed and revised as needed and associated activities must be defined and implemented.

In determining whether to continue the center for the two option years, in addition to considering the factors in 34 CFR 75.253(a), the Secretary will also consider the center's performance and the added contribution to the purpose of the project that would accrue from the continuation.

Intergovernmental Review

This program is subject to the requirements of Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. The objective of the Executive order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism by relying on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

In accordance with the order, this document is intended to provide early notification of the Department's specific plans and actions for this program.

Applicable Program Regulations

34 CFR Part 333, as amended on October 22, 1991 (56 FR 54686–54705).

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1461.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.180, Technology, Educational Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities Program).

Dated: June 10, 1992.

Lamar Alexander,

Secretary of Education.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA No.: 84.180N]

Technology, Educational Media, and Materials for Individuals With Disabilities Program; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards Under the Technology, Educational Media, and Materials for Individuals With Disabilities Program for Fiscal Year 1992

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM: The purpose of this program is to support projects and centers for advancing the availability, quality, use, and effectiveness of technology, assistive technology, educational media, and materials in the education of children and youth with disabilities.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: The eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, State and local educational agencies, public agencies, and private nonprofit or for-profit organizations.

DEADLINE FOR TRANSMITTAL OF APPLICATIONS: July 31, 1992.

DEADLINE FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW: September 30, 1992.

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE: June 19, 1992.

AVAILABLE FUNDS: $500,000 per year.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF AWARDS: 1.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

PROJECT PERIOD: Up to 60 months (including 2 year option).

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86; and (b) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR part 333, as amended on October 22, 1991. See 56 FR 54686–54705.

Priority

The notice of final priority, entitled "Practice Improvement Center on the Effective and Efficient Use of Technology, Media, and Materials in the Provision of Education and Related Services to Children and Youth with Disabilities," published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

This priority supports AMERICA 2000, the President strategy for moving the Nation toward the National Education Goals, by promoting the effective and efficient use of technology, media, and materials among special education, related services, and regular education personnel. The priority thereby seeks to help children and youth with disabilities reach the high levels of academic achievement called for by the Goals.

FOR APPLICATIONS OR INFORMATION CONTACT: Linda Glidewell, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3524, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202–2640. Telephone: (202) 732–1099. Deaf and hard of hearing individuals may call (202) 732–6153.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1461.

Dated: June 10, 1992.

Robert R. Davila,

Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

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